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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of
Public Affairs

Selected Speeches and News Releases

January 2 - January 8, 1991

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CCC INTEREST RATE FOR JANUARY LOWERED TO 4-1/2 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2—Commodity loans disbursed in January by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 4 1/2 percent interest rate, according to Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of the CCC.

The 4 1/2 percent rate is down from December's 5 1/8 percent and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in January.

Any outstanding 1981 loans and subsequent crop commodity loans and any outstanding facility loans approved and disbursed on or after April 1, 1981 and before Jan. 1, 1992, will accrue interest at a rate of 4 1/2 percent per year during 1992. This interest rate is subject to adjustment each Jan. 1.

Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

#

MADIGAN ANNOUNCES PROVISIONS OF THE 1990-91 CROP DISASTER PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced provisions of the Commodity Credit Corporation's 1990-91 crop disaster program.

The application period, which will run from Feb 3 through March 13, will be administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

"President Bush has signed into law a measure providing $995 million for payments to producers who had crop losses due to natural disasters in either 1990 or 1991," Madigan said. "We are preparing to implement this program."

Madigan said producers will select the year for filing and added that payments will be in cash and computed according to the 1990 Farm Bill. He said payments to qualifying farmers could be made beginning April 16.

Producers with qualifying gross revenues of less than $2 million per year may file claims for losses on participating and nonparticipating program crops: wheat, feed grains, ELS and upland cotton, rice, sugar beets and sugar cane, quota and additional peanuts, quota and nonquota tobacco, soybeans,

minor oilseeds and nonprogram crops (which includes all commercially-grown crops not previously mentioned, including: honey, maple sap and syrup, ornamentals, flowering shrubs, trees and turf).

"Producers with crop insurance must have had losses greater than 35 percent," Madigan said. "Producers without crop insurance must have had losses greater than 40 percent."

"Producers intending to file should begin to assemble their records now, so they will be ready when the official application period opens in February," Madigan said. "A producer may not file on one crop on a farm for one year and a different crop on the same farm for the other. However, the producer may request benefits for 1990 on one farm and for 1991 on another farm."

Madigan said producers would receive a more complete set of guidelines, along with a disaster program worksheet, from their county ASCS office in the near future.

"The producer must accept the responsibility of preparing the worksheet, gathering supporting documents on the amount of loss and making an appointment with the county ASCS office to apply for program benefits," he said.

"Although the disaster loss application period will be from Feb. 3 through March 13," Madigan said, "if further documentation is needed, the producer will be advised and given the opportunity to submit the required documentation no later than March 27."

After all applications are filed they will go to ASCS' central computer facility, producer benefits will be summarized and the national allocation factor for limiting total payments to the $995 million will be computed.

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

#

FOREST SERVICE SETS 1992 GRAZING FEES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service today announced fees for grazing livestock on national grasslands in the nine Great Plains states and on Western national forests.

The grazing fee on national grasslands in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming will be $3.42 per head per month effective March 1—a decrease of 16 cents from the 1991 level.

Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson said the fee is going down because of a decrease in private grazing land lease rates for comparable land and an increase in the cost of livestock production.

Grazing fees for national grasslands are determined by a formula that annually adjusts a 1966 base fair market value of $1.33 per head month of livestock grazing use on the national grasslands by indexes based on private grazing land lease rates, beef cattle prices, and the cost of livestock production.

The grazing fee for Western national forests will be $1.92 per head per month effective March 1—a 5-cent decrease from 1991 levels.

Robertson said the fee is going down because increased costs of livestock production in 1991 overshadowed small increases in private grazing land lease rates and beef cattle prices.

The grazing fee for national forests in the Western states is determined by a formula that annually adjusts a 1966 base fair market value of $1.23 per head month by indexes based on private grazing land lease rates, beef cattle prices, and the cost of livestock production.

This fee applies to national forests in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, and to national grasslands in California, Idaho, and Oregon.

For grazing fee purposes, a head month is a month's use of range by one weaned or adult cow, bull, steer, heifer, horse; or five sheep or goats.

Pamela Finney (202) 205-1584

#

USDA PROPOSES TO INCREASE FEES CHARGED TO MEAT AND POULTRY PLANTS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service is proposing to increase fees charged to federally inspected meat and poultry plants for inspection services involving laboratory work, voluntary inspection, and holiday and overtime inspection.

"This is a minimal fee increase designed to reflect, as usual, the increased costs of providing these services," said Dr. Ronald Prucha, acting administrator of FSIS.

Overtime and holiday rates for federal inspection at meat and poultry plants would be increased to $29.72 per hour, up from $28.32. Certification and inspection services would be raised to $29.00, up from $27.72 per hour. Fees for laboratory services would be increased to $49.80, from $47.96 per hour.

Federal law provides for the inspection of meat and poultry products involved in interstate and international commerce during regular working

hours. USDA is authorized to charge plants for inspection services beyond regular work schedules, laboratory work, and voluntary inspection and certification procedures.

Comments on the proposed fee increases may be sent to the Policy Office, Attn: Linda Carey, FSIS Hearing Clerk, Room 3171-South, 14th and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250. Comments must be received by Jan. 22.

FSIS and its 9,000 employees are dedicated to ensuring that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 720-0314

#

USDA EXTENDS RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORTS OF CANADIAN POTATOES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is extending restrictions on the importation of Canadian potatoes to additional areas in Canada because of the discovery of new outbreaks of a foreign potato disease.

"The disease is caused by a virus, known as PVY-N, that can infect potatoes, tomatoes, peppers and tobacco, to which it is particularly damaging," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator for plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"This strain of the virus has never been confirmed in the United States, but it can be transmitted long distances through the movement of seed potatoes," said Lee. "The PVY-N virus also can be spread by aphids feeding on infected plants and transmitting the virus to healthy plants."

Early this year, Agriculture Canada notified APHIS an outbreak of PVY-N had been detected in the provinces of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. In response, APHIS established interim regulations prohibiting the entry of most seed potatoes from affected areas and requiring table stock and processing potatoes be treated with a sprout inhibitor.

Lee said the APHIS restrictions were imposed following consultations with Canadian officials. "We believe the restrictions are necessary to prevent the introduction of PVY-N, especially since Canada is the source of many seed potatoes planted in states where tobacco is an important crop."

Recently, additional outbreaks of PVY-N were discovered in potatoes in the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec. Because of these new finds, APHIS is extending the restrictions to include potatoes from

those provinces. However, seed potatoes from Canada, except those from Ontario or Prince Edward Island, still may be imported with special certification.

APHIS is working with Agricultural Canada and provincial officials to develop standard survey measures and eradication procedures to help prevent the disease from spreading to the United States.

Notice of the interim rule is being published in the Jan. 6 Federal Register. Comments will be accepted if they are received on or before March 3. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket 91-105 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and DevelopIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be inspected as soon as received at USDA, Rm 1141-S, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Doug Hendrix (301) 436-7253

#

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM, NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL RECEIVE GRANT

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6—The Cooperative Extension System and National 4-H Council have received a $3.5 million grant from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund to assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs over a four-year period for Extension's National Youth At Risk Initiative.

The Youth At Risk Initiative targets the social and economic implications of not addressing the urgent needs of the next generation of Americans. One of Extension's goals is to expand its outreach to more youth, particularly to those who are most vulnerable because of poverty, lack of parental and community support and negative peer pressure.

"This grant will provide opportunities for staff to maintain and enhance technical knowledge and process skills," said Myron Johnsrud, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service, the federal partner in the Cooperative Extension System. "The grant will help assure a high level of staff competence enabling Extension to enhance its youth education programs" Johnsrud said.

Over the next four years, Extension will use the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund grant to improve and create training curricula, expand an

existing data base on youth development, conduct national and regional training activities, and pilot various model training programs.

The grant will be used along with over $25 million of new and reallocated federal, state, local, and private funds to build and strengthen capacity in areas of nationwide emphasis.

"Helping people help themselves has always been part of our philanthropic heritage," said George Grune, chairman of the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. "This grant will enable Extension to recruit, train, and develop the best people, who will in turn be in a stronger position to serve the diverse needs of today's young people."

The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund is committed to increasing educational and career opportunities for all youth. Through annual grants of approximately $30 million, the fund invests nationwide in people and programs dedicated to improving the effectiveness of schools and other organizations that serve youth.

A national educational network, the Cooperative Extension System is a partnership of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, state land grant universities and county governments.

Tom Willis (202) 720-2047

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GENE-ENGINEERED COTTON WINS ROUND 2 AGAINST CATERPILLARS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—Farmers could have wormproof cotton varieties in a few years, now that genetically engineered cotton plants have delivered another knockout punch to several caterpillar pests, according to a new U.S. Department of Agriculture report.

Armed with a bacterial gene that makes a paralyzing protein, the plants "gave almost complete control of cotton bollworm and tobacco budworm" in outdoor tests, said David Altman, a research geneticist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service in College Station, Texas.

In 1991 as in 1990, new genes enabled the plants to kill caterpillar pests, according to the latest issue of Agricultural Research magazine. Scientists at ARS, state universities and Monsanto Co. ran tests at six sites in Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

Monsanto scientists in St. Louis inserted the new genes, originally from a natural soil bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis or Bt. Bt, sold for 30 years as a natural pest control, makes a protein that paralyzes a caterpillar's digestive

tract. The test plants make similar proteins, said Altman, at the ARS Southern Crops Research Laboratory.

Each year, cotton growers spend $70 million or more on caterpillar insecticides. But "commercial Bt cotton varieties could be available to farmers by the mid-1990's," Monsanto senior scientist Randy Deaton said in the magazine. The company is working with several seed companies to breed Bt plant lines with top commercial varieties, he added.

In Arizona, "pink bollworm larvae started to feed on flowers but quit and died when they were still so small you could barely see them," said F. Doug Wilson, who heads cotton and insect genetics research at ARS' Western Cotton Research Laboratory in Phoenix. The Bt plants also checked cotton leafperforators, saltmarsh caterpillars and beet armyworms.

"Monsanto came to ARS because they wanted an unbiased referee, and we have three decades of experience studying insect resistance in cotton plants," said Johnie Jenkins, director of the ARS Crop Science Research Laboratory, Starkville, Miss.

In Mississippi, he said, tobacco budworms damaged only 0 to 7 percent of the flower buds, or squares, on the Bt plants. Up to half the buds were damaged on ordinary cotton plants unprotected by insecticide, he added.

Jenkins said the scientists all recognize that "while we had almost no damage on the Bt plants, they're not a cure-all."

Strategies are being explored to prevent or reduce caterpillars' buildup of resistance to Bt. For example, geneticists including Altman have produced new strains of transgenic plants. These plants hold Bt genes as well as cotton genes for traits to help thwart pests or make the plant less attractive to them. The new strains will be tested outdoors against caterpillars next summer.

In 1991, ARS ran tests in Mississippi, Texas and Arizona in cooperation with Mississippi State University, Texas A&M University and the University of Arizona. Other trials in Alabama, Texas and Louisiana were run by Monsanto, Texas A&M and Louisiana State University.

Jim De Quattro (301) 504-8648

#

USDA ANNOUNCES MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM ALLOCATIONS FOR FISCAL 1992

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced 61 projects that will receive $200 million in Market Promotion Program (MPP) allocations for fiscal year 1992.

The 1992 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act mandates that not more than $130 million of the $200 million may be obligated by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation before Sept. 30, 1992. The remaining $70 million will be available for obligation on Sept. 30, 1992.

The MPP is authorized by the 1990 Farm Bill. The law requires USDA to use funds or commodities from the CCC to "encourage the development, maintenance, and expansion of commercial export marketsfor agricultural commodities through cost share assistance to eligible trade organizations that implement a foreign market development program."

The MPP is administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service through cooperative agreements between the CCC and the agricultural industry representatives listed below.

Authority to expend promotional resources provided in these allocations is a two-stage process. First, FAS must approve the recipients' application for funds, set its 1992 allocation level, overall program ceiling, budget ceilings by country, budget ceilings by country for branded and generic activities, and conditions relating to the conduct of the 1992 program.

In the second stage, as prescribed in the application approval letter, the recipient will submit a detailed plan fully describing proposed activities, cost codes, and resources to be contributed by the recipient. Private U.S. firms will have an opportunity to apply for participation in the Export Incentive Programs (EIP's) listed below. Procedures and deadlines for EIP participation will be made at a later date. For additional information and referral to the appropriate program contact, call (202) 720-5521.

A list of the 61 projects appears on the following pages.

Chart on following page

Market Promotion Program Allocations, Fiscal Year 1992

Nonprofit Applicant Organizations:	Allocations Commodities:	(MILLION $)
Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute	Salmon (fresh, frozen, canned, dried and smoked)	8.520
American Horticultural Marketing Council	Live plants	0.148
American Indian Trade and Development Council	Beef, seafood, forest products (from reservations)	0.228
American Sheep Industry Association	Wool (raw, pulled, scoured or top)	0.260
American Soybean Association and products	Soybeans, soybean oil, meal	5.040
Asparagus USA	Fresh, processed and frozen asparagus	0.216
Brandy Export Association	Fruit brandy and grappa	1.070
California Avocado Commission	Avocados and products	0.332
California Cling Peach Advisory Board	Canned peaches and fruit cocktail	2.350
California Kiwifruit Commission	Fresh kiwifruit	0.659
California Pistachio Commission	Pistachios, raw and roasted	1.210
California Prune Board	Prunes and products thereof	7.520
California Raisin Advisory Board	Raisins and products thereof	8.410

California Strawberry Advisory Board	Strawberries, fresh and frozen	0.936
California Table Grape Commission	Fresh table grapes	2.890
California Tree Fruit Agreement	Plums, peaches, nectarines fresh prunes and Bartlett pears	1.210
California Walnut Commission	Walnuts, shelled and in-shell	6.710
Cherry Marketing Inst., Inc.	Processed tart cherries (dried, water-packed, canned, frozen, IQF frozen, juice concentrate and juice products)	0.644
Chocolate Manufacturers Association	Chocolate and sugar confectionery	2.110
Cotton Council International	Raw cotton	15.790
Eastern U.S. Agricultural and Food Export Council (EUSAFEC)	Regional high-value food products	1.430
Florida Department of Citrus	Florida fresh and processed citrus	8.870
Ginseng Board of Wisconsin, Inc.	Ginseng root	0.356
Hop Growers of America, Inc.	Hop cones, ground hop cones hop cone pellets, hop extract	0.199
Kentucky Distillers' Association	Bourbon whiskey	3.790
Michigan Apple Commission	Fresh empire apples	0.208
Mid-America International Agri-Trade Council (MIATCO)	Regional high-value food products	4.250

National Association of Animal Breeders	Bovine semen, frozen	0.394
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) products	Regional high-value food	0.536
National Dry Bean Council	Dry edible beans	0.310
National Forest Products Association	Solid wood products, excluding paper and pulp (e.g. lumber, millwork, veneer plywood, particle-board, other panel and laminated wood products)	14.680
National Honey Board	Natural honey	0.081
National Peanut Council	Peanuts, raw, inshell and processed (including peanut butter, roasted, flavored/ coated and peanut candy)	1.100
National Potato Promotion Board	Frozen french fried potatoes frozen potato products, fresh potatoes and seed potatoes	5.600
National Sunflower Association	Sunflowerseed, sunflowerseed oil and confection sunflowerseed	0.879
North American Export Grain Association	Grains, oilseeds	0.380
Northwest Cherry Growers	Fresh sweet cherries	1.040
Oregon Seed Council	Grass seed	0.187
Oregon-Washington-California	Fresh pears	3.020

Pear Bureau		
Pacific Coast Canned Pear Service, Inc.	Canned and frozen Bartlett pears	0.129
Popcorn Institute	Popcorn	0.197
Rice Council for Market Development	Rice, rice products and rice by-products	5.330
Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA)	Regional high-value food products	1.540
Southeast Fisheries Association	Catfish, crawfish, squid	0.205
Tobacco Associates	Unmanufactured tobacco	3.490
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council	Edible dry peas and lentils	1.160
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council, Inc.	Poultry, eggs, further processed and related products	7.010
U.S. Feed Grains Council	Corn, sorghum, barley and	4.780
U.S. Meat Export Federation	Red meats derived from the bovine, equine, ovine and porcine animal species, including their variety meats/offals and processed products of which they are the major ingredient	12.950
U.S. Mink Export Development Council	Raw and dressed U.S. mink pelts	2.300
U.S. Wheat Associates	Wheat	4.350
Washington State Apple Commission	Fresh apples	4.410

Wild Blueberry Association of North America	Frozen and canned wild blueberries	0.026
Wine Institute	California grape wine	14.310
Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA)	Regional high-value food products	4.710
Export Incentive Programs:	Almonds, natural and processed	4.140
	California and Arizona fresh and processed citrus	9.200
	Processed sweet corn (canned whole kernel (golden and white), cream style, and mixtures (e.g. corn with peppers); frozen corn on the cob, cut corn, cream style and mixtures)	2.790
	Concord grape products	1.020
	Cranberries, fresh and frozen (concentrate, sauces and drinks)	0.784
	Processed tomato products (including peeled tomatoes, paste, puree, sauces, catsup and juice)	0.606
Reserved by CCC for Evaluation Projects[1]		1.000
TOTAL		200.000

[1] This amount has been reserved by the Commodity Credit Corporation to monitor and evaluate MPP program effectiveness.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448

#

USDA COMPLETES NATIONAL SWINE HEALTH SURVEY

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the results of the first comprehensive, nationwide survey of swine health and productivity.

The National Swine Survey, sponsored by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, consists of information on rearing practices, biosecurity efforts, illness, death rates and preventive practices. Over 80 percent of U.S. hog farms and 95 percent of the swine population are represented in the survey results.

"Information gathered by the swine survey will allow pork producers and veterinarians to make informed decisions about disease priorities, farm management practices and productivity," said Dr. Lonnie J. King, deputy administrator for veterinary services in APHIS.

"This survey provides statistically based information to support decision-making and action by producers, researchers, and animal health officials," King said.

APHIS collaborated with USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service to select a random sample of swine producers in 18 states and to collect data on management practices from 1,661 farms. For three months, 712 of those farms kept records measuring illness and death in baby pigs and sows, preventive and treatment practices, and productivity information. APHIS veterinary medical officers visited these farms monthly to collect the records and obtain additional information.

All participating farmers received their individual survey results so they could compare their farms with the national averages. Farmers can use the survey information to modify husbandry practices for greater productivity and more effective preventive care.

Survey findings included:

—15 percent of live-born piglets in the study died before weaning. The piglets' average age at death was six days.

—The most frequently reported instance of death in preweaning piglets (43 percent) was crushing by the sow. Other reported instances of piglet death, in order of reported frequency, included starvation, scours (diarrhea), lameness or joint problems, deformities, respiratory illness and nervous-system illness.

—78 percent of swine producers surveyed vaccinated in the farrowing house to prevent illness in sows and gilts; 56 percent vaccinated boars. Preweaned piglets were vaccinated 57 percent of the time.

—Other frequent preventive practices included deworming, mange/lice treatment, and antibiotic treatment for adult swine.

—More than 80 percent of the sampled farms maintained at least one totally confined farrowing facility.

The comprehensive swine survey is part of a program to provide additional statistical data on the health and economic impact of husbandry practices on animal health production. APHIS operates the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) in Fort Collins, Colo., as a clearinghouse for animal health information.

APHIS will conduct similar surveys of beef, dairy and poultry farms in the future, according to Will Hueston, NAHMS director.

"By identifying losses from disease and other animal health conditions, we are able to assist farmers and veterinarians to identify safer, more effective farm animal management and health care," said Hueston.

Copies of the National Swine Survey summary report are available to the public. For further information write to: Swine Survey, National Animal Health Monitoring System, USDA-APHIS-VS, 555 S. Howes, Suite 300, Ft. Collins, Colo. 80521.

Alan Zagier (301) 436-7255

#

USDA WAIVES CROP INSURANCE REQUIREMENT FOR FmHA EMERGENCY LOANS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8—The requirement for farmers to have crop insurance to qualify for U.S. Department of Agriculture emergency loans has been waived for crops grown for harvest in 1991, Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan announced today.

Previously, farmers were required to obtain crop insurance, where available, as a condition of eligibility for emergency disaster loans from USDA's Farmers Home Administration.

When areas are stricken by natural disasters, such as floods, freezes, drought or other natural occurrences that cause widespread agricultural production or property losses, FmHA's low-interest emergency loans are made available to assist farmers and ranchers in recovering from their losses.

Crop producers in counties which are named eligible for assistance have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses.

To be eligible, farmers must have suffered a 30-percent loss of normal production, be unable to get credit elsewhere, and be able to repay the loan, along with other debts.

Applicants also must have adequate collateral to secure the loan. At this time, 1,508 counties in 48 states are eligible for FmHA emergency loan assistance.

Applications for assistance under the emergency loan program should be submitted at FmHA county offices. The agency has about 1,900 county offices nationwide. Addresses can be obtained from local telephone directories under the listing for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Joe O'Neill (202) 720-4323

#

USDA ANNOUNCES 1992 RICE PROGRAM PROVISIONS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced a preliminary Acreage Reduction Program of zero percent for the 1992 crop of rice.

Other provisions are:

—The national average loan and purchase rate will be $6.50 per hundredweight. Rates for milled kernels will be announced prior to the 1992 program signup period.

—The established target price will be $10.71 per hundredweight.

Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

#

USDA REQUESTS COMMENT ON PROPOSED CONCENTRATION STUDY

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced it is seeking public comment on a proposed study of concentration in the red meat packing industry.

Concentration is the share of business accounted for by the leading red meat packing firms.

"USDA's Packers and Stockyards Administration was appropriated $500,000 for fiscal year 1992 to study concentration in the red meat packing industry," said Virgil M. Rosendale, P&SA administrator. "At least $250,000 of this amount will be used to contract with other organizations and universities."

Rosendale said a notice will be published in today's Federal Register requesting public comments on potential projects for the study. "The possible topics or projects of a concentration study in the red meat industry are numerous," Rosendale said. "To assist in the decisions concerning those specific projects, we are requesting comments on project selection, research methodology, data needs and sources, and potential participants."

Comments should be sent by Feb. 7 to: Gerald E. Grinnell, IAS-P&SA-USDA, Room 3052-S, Washington, D.C. 20250-2800.

Sara K. Wright (202) 720-9528

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